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Agenda item 7
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-seventh session

Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation
(*Item 3 (b)*)

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the evaluation of the Economic Commission for Europe

1. At its 6th meeting, on 7 June 2017, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the evaluation of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (E/AC.51/2017/5).

2. The Assistant Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report and, together with representatives of OIOS, the Executive Secretary of ECE and representatives of ECE, responded to questions raised during its consideration by the Committee.

Discussion

3. Delegations expressed their appreciation for the report of OIOS, particularly with regard to its analysis of the role of ECE in supporting member countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. Delegations commended the multilateral activities of ECE and its work in sustainable development in general and the Sustainable Development Goals in particular. Delegations indicated that they considered the Commission to be a promising discussion platform for normative and regional processes, and noted that its technical expertise and standard-setting work were important for the achievement of the entire range of the Goals. One delegation noted with satisfaction that an international conference on the Goals held in their country had been successfully

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supported by ECE. Another delegation referred to the concentration of project activity in the area of the environment, and clarification was sought from ECE regarding that issue. As regards the normative and standard-setting nature of the work of ECE, a question was raised on how the Commission monitored the impact of its norms and standards, since such monitoring did not appear to be done systematically.

5. Several delegations discussed the global, as opposed to the regional, nature of the work and outputs of ECE. One delegation questioned OIOS about defining a convention as global rather than regional on the basis of the criterion of only one non-member country being a signatory. The delegation noted that other regional economic commissions had mandates and activities in the same areas in which ECE carried out its work, and that regional commissions had their own regional specificities to consider, even though membership in the commissions often included member countries outside their respective regions.

6. A delegation commented that, although the report appeared to reflect the assumption that the global focus of some of the activities of ECE was not considered to be positive, it was of the view that that focus was positive for both the Commission and non-member countries. Furthermore, the delegation recognized the effort of ECE in mapping its global outputs and enquired what the Commission considered to be the likely result of that exercise.

7. A number of delegations discussed the potential financial implications of a global focus and the resources that would be required to cope with increased demands. One delegation commended ECE for finding ways to realize efficiencies and for working within the confines of its current budget, and sought clarification regarding the actual increases in cost that had occurred when ECE products became more widely available.

8. A delegation reiterated some of the challenges raised in the report, namely, the need to cooperate with partners within and outside ECE and the significant increase in workload, together with cuts in resources. The delegation sought clarification as to how ECE was planning to ensure the future implementation of its programmes in those circumstances, taking into account the various instruments that the Commission had at its disposal.

Conclusions and recommendations

9. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly endorse the recommendations contained in paragraphs 57 to 61 of the report of OIOS on the evaluation of ECE (E/AC.51/2017/5).**

10. **With regard to recommendation 3, the Committee took note that the issue had been the subject of discussion within ECE.**

11. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly encourage ECE to continue to promote economic integration and interconnectivity in line with the existing mandate of the Commission.**